

I have made no plea this evening for its indulgence or its development beyond the utilitarian. No other is needed, but were it needed we have it in overwhelming abundance in the pleasures and those of the highest and purest in our nature that are opened to us by the imagination. It gives life all its colour, all its charm, even all its meaning. For it, time does not exist, nor space, and on the wings of the imagination we can fly the world and conquer time. What wonder then that our poets call this faculty divine, or that Wordsworth should have seen in the glory that shines round the child in his imaginative view of the world, the after-glow of the celestial light of some previous existence, which gradually fades before the hard light of our common day :—

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Appareled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—  
Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar :  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home :  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
He sees it in his joy ;  
The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended ;  
At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

## THE DAUGHTER OF BRABANTIO.

BY RICHARD DICKINS.

In the working out of the tragedy of *Othello*, Shakespeare employs but seven characters of any importance, and only one of these is wholly sympathetic—the much wronged father, Brabantio. Brabantio only appears in the first Act, the part is one of not more than some 140 lines, but in that small space Shakespeare succeeds in giving us the most beautiful and, we think, the most pathetic study of a father to be found even in the wonderful gallery which contains such portraits as those of Lear, Prospero, Shylock and Leonato.

No contrast can be greater than that between the fathers, Brabantio and Capulet.

It is impossible to suppose that Brabantio had ever spoken an unkind word to Desdemona or that he could have felt any expression of his love for her too tender. Capulet when his will is crossed by Juliet, assails her in terms which can only be described as brutal, and which explain and excuse his daughter's failure to make any appeal to him before entering into a secret marriage.

*Cymbeline* and others of Shakespeare's fathers of revolted daughters, were themselves responsible for their troubles by endeavouring to force distasteful marriages upon their children, and even old Leonato in his grief and despair, sides against poor Hero, in the hour of her sore need.

How different would the scene have been had Brabantio been Leonato, and Desdemona Hero ; then the daughter would have found a sure refuge in her father's arms and the cowardly slanders of twenty princes would not have shaken his trust in his child.

There is, of course, no parallel between Brabantio and Lear. Lear is a study of senile decay, and although he loves his daughters, his anger masters his love on the slightest provocation, and he curses his youngest daughter without cause as

NOTE.—In the author's paper on "The Character of Hamlet," which appeared in the October number of this Review, the name of the impersonator of Hamlet in Shakespeare's time, was by an oversight given as Betterton instead of Burbage.

readily as a little later, and with better reason, he curses her elder sisters.

Brabantio in his love for Desdemona is more nearly akin to the happier Prospero, and on looking back through the years of his fatherhood he also might have said—

"I have done nothing but in care of thee,  
Of thee, my dear one! thee, my daughter!"

But the loss of his daughter was a blow which crushed him, even more hopelessly than would have been the case with Prospero, for the latter had his books and his studies—Brabantio had only Desdemona.

In the misery brought upon them by their daughters, there is a strong parallel between the cases of Brabantio and Shylock. Each was the father of one motherless daughter, each loved his child tenderly, and the love of each was returned by the cruellest ingratitude. Moreover, Jessica's marriage with a Christian would appear to Shylock almost as unnatural as that of Desdemona with a Moor. Of the two acts of cruelty, however, Jessica's is the less inexcusable for, wordly, heartless, contemptible little minx as she was, her life in her father's austere house, must have been dull, he, doubtless, often severe in spite of his affection, her isolation as one of the Jewish community galling, and the temptation to escape to the gay outside world considerable.

We hear next to nothing of Desdemona's life in her father's palace, and yet, in some wonderful, inexplicable way, we seem to know all about it, and this knowledge is, we think, conveyed by words or lines apparently unimportant, but inserted by something akin to inspiration.

So far as we can judge, Desdemona lost her mother in early childhood, she was Brabantio's one ewe lamb, the being in whom all his love, all his happiness, all his hopes were centered. How tenderly she was treated we learn from her when she says in the fourth Act—

"Those that do teach young babes,  
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks:  
In good faith  
I am a child to chiding."

No thought was spared to prepare her for the position she would fill in the world, she was liberally educated according to

the ideas of the times. She was "delicate with her needle, an admiral musician, of high and plenteous wit and invention." Above all, contrary to usual custom, no compulsion or undue pressure was brought to bear upon her as regards marriage, for we repeatedly hear that she did not "affect many proposed matches." Doubtless, Brabantio was happy to have her with him, content to know that he owned her love, and to have his life gladdened by her beauty day by day, and so the peaceful years passed with Brabantio's household, until a few months before the play opens. Then after some successful campaign, the Moor, Othello, general of the Venetian armies, returns to Venice, and Brabantio, as a Senator and one of the "great ones of the City," meets him, admires his brave, simple, noble nature, and oft invites him to his palace.

Nothing in this great play is, we think, more masterly than the manner in which Shakespeare sets forth the circumstances which brought about the unnatural marriage of Othello and Desdemona. Desdemona was an only, and a spoilt child; probably no wish, no whim, she had ever expressed had gone ungratified. Suitors had presented themselves and the very ease with which their love was to be had made them distasteful to the beautiful girl, sated with fortunes favours. Othello interested her, she saw the nobility of his character, admired his courage and success, above all she pitied the terrible sufferings he had endured. He became her hero, and comparing him with the "wealthy curled darlings" of her own country, the possibility of love entered her mind, and with it the knowledge that such a husband was the one, and probably only, thing her father would not grant her. Opposition was an unknown experience, and one not to be borne, and with the obstinacy of a gentle, but over-petted nature, she determined to have the thing upon which she had set her heart. Desdemona was so young, so pure, so innocent, that the repellent nature of such a marriage did not even occur to her—it was a marriage of pure innocence. She saw "Othello's visage in his mind," and the part of him she loved was the immortal.

That was how the matter appeared to Desdemona's pure mind, but the fact, of course, remains that the marriage was an unnatural one. Lewd and horrible, as are the words

addressed by Iago to Brabantio, when warning him of his daughter's flight, they fairly indicate the general opinion of such a union and remind us that the prospect of becoming a "grandsire," which should have been the greatest joy and comfort of his old age, must to Brabantio have been a thought of horror.

We know that in the courtship of Othello and Desdemona, she was something more than "half the wooer." Othello relates how, he having ended the story of his adventures—

"She thanked me;  
And bad me, if I had a friend that lov'd her  
I should but teach him how to tell my story  
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spoke."

We further hear from Roderigo, that when she fled her father's house she was—

"Transported with no worse nor better guard,  
But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier."

The details of the elopement are left to our imagination, but as Iago evidently only knew of it after the marriage had taken place, and as Cassio, who knew of Othello's love "from first to last" and "went between them very oft," knew nothing of it till some hours later, it appears probable that Desdemona took her fate into her own hands, and fled to Othello without his being aware of her intention. This is possible for she was absolutely innocent and desperately determined to have that upon which she had set her heart. Also, we would gladly absolve Othello, so far as this is possible, from the meanness of stealing the daughter of the host who "loved" him. He was of course under the spell of her beauty and her charm, and, practically at her request, he told his love, but we would fain believe that he was not guilty of the actual theft, especially as such a dishonourable action must have appeared to him unnecessary, for he says—

"'Tis yet to know  
..... I fetch my life and being  
From men of royal siege; and my demerits  
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune  
As this that I have reached."

The horror ever in the mind of Brabantio would for him have no existence.

So we come to the opening of the tragedy, but as we read we must remember the nature of Brabantio's daughter as

Shakespeare has drawn it: gentle, pure, innocent, loving, and full of pity for all, but the one being to whom she owed everything in life, and with but one other blemish, lack of candour and truth. She had practised a long course of carefully arranged deception upon the father who trusted her utterly, her plans had succeeded, she had discarded her father, and was the wife of the Moor, but Heaven's retribution awaited her in Cyprus, though her conscience was silent and as yet she had no sense save of her new found happiness.

The play opens at night in a street in Venice, before Brabantio's house, and Iago enters with his dupe Roderigo. The first scene gives us a masterly outline of the completest villain depicted in literature. A handsome, bluff soldier, a man of the world, with a sense of coarse humour, roughly sympathetic though no flatterer, and exceeding honest. That is the outward Iago. Before many lines have been spoken, however, we know him as he is. With the brain of a genius, he possesses the soul of a fiend, and a mind that is a cesspool for foul and loathsome thoughts. He is without truth, shame, pity or remorse, he has no belief in virtue or purity, love he describes as "merely a lust of the blood" and the most perfect woman as only fit "to suckle fools and chronicle small beer."

No imagining of hell can be more dreadful than that it is peopled with beings with such obscene minds as that of this devil.

He frankly despises Roderigo, and takes no pains to deceive him, only disguising his infamy under a thin cloak of bluff, worldly wisdom, and he unhesitatingly explains the keynote of his character—selfishness.

With almost his opening words he speaks of his loathing for Othello, and in reply to Roderigo's complaint: "Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate," says—

"Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,  
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,  
Off-capp'd to him; and, by the faith of man,  
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:  
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,  
Nonsuits my mediators; for, *Certes*, says he,  
*I have already chose my officer.*  
And what was he?  
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,  
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,

A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife ;  
 That never set a squadron in the field,  
 Nor the division of a battle knows  
 More than a spinster ; . . . . .  
 . . . . . But he, sir, had the election :  
 And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof  
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus and on other grounds  
 Christian and heathen, must be be-lee'd and calm'd  
 By debtor and creditor : this counter-caster,  
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,  
 And I—God bless the mark !—his Moorship's ancient."

It seems to us that a cruel injustice had been done, that Iago's complaint was fully justified, and further that the preferment of Cassio over his head, is the first of the many indications given that Othello had little perception of men's characters. Debased as was Iago's moral character, we have no reason to think him anything but brave, and the quality of his intellect was of course extraordinary. To make such a poor thing as Cassio the superior in command to the brilliant Iago appears an act of sheer folly, which must have been resented by any officer in Iago's position.

The alarm is given by Iago and his companion, Brabantio is aroused, and told of his daughter's flight, and we note the joy Iago takes in giving pain, each word he speaks stabs and insults.

Brabantio, having searched Desdemona's empty apartments, enters exclaiming—

It is too true an evil : gone she is ;  
 And what's to come of my despised time  
 Is nought but bitterness . . . . .  
 . . . . . O unhappy girl !  
 With the Moor, say'st thou ? Who would be a father !  
 How didst thou know 'twas she ? O, thou deceiv'st me  
 Past thought ! . . . . .  
 . . . . . Are they married, think you ?  
*Rod.* Truly, I think they are.  
*Bra.* O heaven ! How got she out ? O treason of the blood !  
 Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds  
 By what you see them act. Are there not charms  
 By which the property of youth and maidhood  
 May be abused ? Have you not read, Roderigo,  
 Of some such thing ?

Even in the grief of the discovery of his loss and of the deceit practised upon him, he says nothing harsh of Desdemona, he only speaks of her as an "unhappy girl." He knows

that the future holds nothing but bitterness for him, but with the quickness of thought he finds an excuse for his child. He will not believe that she has wronged him willingly, and he clings to the hope that she has acted under the influence of charms, and by the time he comes face to face with Othello in the next scene this hope has taken root in his heart, and grown to belief, for he cries—

"O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter ?  
 Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her ;  
 For I'll refer me to all things of sense,  
 If she in chains of magic were not bound,  
 Whether a maid so tender, fair and happy,  
 So opposite to marriage that she shunn'd  
 The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,  
 Would ever have, to incur a general mock,  
 Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom  
 Of such a thing as thou, to fear, not to delight.  
 Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense,  
 That thou has practised on her with foul charms,  
 Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals  
 That waken motion."

He hears the Duke is in Council and adds—

" Bring him away  
 Mine's not an idle cause ; the duke himself  
 Or any of my brothers of the State,  
 Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own."

But alas ! Iago's judgment was the sounder when speaking of Othello, he said : "I do know the State cannot with safety cast him ; for he's embark'd with such loud reason to the Cyprus wars, that for their souls another of his fathom have they none to lead their business."

Before passing from this scene, we should dwell for a moment on our first introduction to Othello.

The Othello of the first two Acts is the man whom Desdemona loved and the Venetian Senate trusted and honoured. Here he betrays none of the defects of an inferior race, he is a man of noble bearing, calm amid excitement, a leader of men.

In the third scene, the Duke and Senators are sitting in midnight council, while messenger after messenger hurries in, bringing news of the Turkish fleet sailing to attack Cyprus. Othello, Iago, Brabantio and their followers enter, and Othello is at once joyfully greeted by the Duke : "Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you against the general enemy,

Ottoman." Then he greets Brabantio: "Welcome, gentle signor, we lack'd your counsel and your help to-night." Brabantio replies that not the "general care," but o'er-bearing private grief accounts for his presence, that his daughter "is abused, stolen from me, and corrupted by spells and medicines bought of mountebanks, for nature so preposterously to err, being not deficient, blind or lame of sense, sans witchcraft could not."

"Who'e'er he be that in this foul proceeding hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself, and you of her, the bloody book of law you shall yourself read," replies the Duke, and Brabantio answers: "Here is the man, this Moor."

Othello is asked what he can say to the accusation, and the two following speeches are of such importance, that they must be quoted in full.

*Oth.* Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,  
My very noble and approved good masters,  
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,  
It is most true: true, I have married her:  
The very head and front of my offending  
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,  
And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace;  
For since these arms of mine had seven<sup>½</sup> years' pith,  
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used  
Their dearest action in the tented field,  
And little of this great world can I speak,  
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle,  
And therefore little shall I grace my cause  
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,  
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver  
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,  
What conjuration and what mighty magic,  
(For such proceeding I am charged withal,)  
I won his daughter with.

*Bra.* A maiden never bold;  
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion  
Blush'd at herself; and she, in spite of nature  
Of years, of country, credit, every thing,  
To fall in love with what she feared to look on:  
It is a judgment maim'd and most imperfect  
That will confess perfection so could err  
Against all rules of nature, and must be driven  
To find out practices of cunning hell,  
Why this should be. I therefore vouch again  
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,  
Or with some dram conjured to this effect,  
He wrought upon her.

"To vouch this is no proof," replies the Duke, and at Othello's entreaty Desdemona is sent for to speak of him before her father.

To return for a moment to the speeches of Othello and Brabantio, we find much in them to cause us to reflect. In the first place we must be struck by the extraordinary absence of the slightest realisation by Othello, that he has done Brabantio any wrong, or of the existence of the smallest necessity to crave his pardon. Later in the play he so often speaks of his honour and commentators so frequently insist that his love of honour was his leading characteristic, that his apparent inability to gauge his conduct towards Brabantio is worthy of careful note. No doubt such actions as his were at that time more leniently regarded than at the present day, but for the trusted guest, a man, be it noted, not young but "declin'd into the vale of years," to steal away his host's daughter, a mere child, was at the best a sorry and disgraceful business. True he does not himself say he has stolen her, but that he has "*ta'en away* this old man's daughter!" The distinction between the terms reminds us of Pistol's objection to the plain word, when he exclaims, "Convey the wise call it—'Steal!' foh! a fico for the phrase!"

The next point is the statement "Rude am I in my speech and therefore little shall I grace my cause in speaking for myself." We have remarked before that Othello's judgment of men (both of himself and others) was worth very little, and the above lines go to prove this. He was not a courtier, was not speaking with assumed modesty, he was stating what he believed to be a fact, quite ignorant that with his Arabic blood, he inherited the Oriental's picturesque flow of speech and vivid imagination. It is after his next magnificent speech, that the Duke says "I think this tale would win my daughter too!"

In Brabantio's speech the important lines occur: "And she—to fall in love with what she fear'd to look on." That this truly represented the assumed attitude of Desdemona, we know from Othello's acceptance of the statement in Act 3, and it shows how studied and deliberate had been the deception practised on Brabantio. It should also be remembered that these words are heard by Iago, who is present in the Senate House. The remaining point is that Brabantio speaks of his daughter as "perfection."

Othello's beautiful recital of his wooing (referred to above) follows, and as he finishes Desdemona enters.

The speech has not only moved the Duke to admiration, but has carried conviction to the mind of poor Brabantio, and crushed the hope he has been clinging to that his child has not been responsible for her actions. When the Duke says: "Good Brabantio, take up this mangled matter at the best," there is hopelessness in Brabantio's reply—

"I pray you, hear her speak:

If she confess that she was half the wooer,  
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame  
Light on the man! Come hither, gentle mistress:  
Do you perceive in all this noble company  
Where most you owe obedience?"

Desdemona replies—

"My noble father,

I do perceive here a divided duty:  
To you I am bound for life and education;  
My life and education both do learn me  
How to respect you; you are the lord of duty;  
I am hitherto your daughter; but here's my husband,  
And so much duty as my mother show'd  
To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to the Moor, my lord."

This is the only occasion on which Desdemona addresses her father, there is no suggestion of regret for the sorrow she has brought upon him, no desire for pardon, no hint of love; merely: "My life and education both do learn me how to *respect* you." Compare these words with those spoken by Cordelia to the angry Lear—

"Good my lord,  
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I  
Return those duties back as are right fit,  
Obey you, love you, and most honour you."

Cordelia was speaking with studious moderation, and merely suggesting the depth of her feelings, but could two utterances differ more widely? and assuredly the difference and the contrast between the two daughters were not unintentional. No wonder the poor father replies—

"God be with you! I have done;  
Please it your grace, on to the State affairs."

Then, for the last time in his life, he speaks to his daughter—

"For your sake, jewel,  
I am glad at soul I have no other child;  
For thy escape would teach me tyranny  
To hang clogs on them."

Nowhere in Shakespeare's plays is there any parallel to the gentleness shewn by Brabantio to the child who has so sorely wronged him. There is no curse, not even a reproach, no anger, he is too deeply wounded for anything but pain. When Desdemona enters he addresses her as "gentle mistress," and when she has cast him off and declared him to be no longer "the lord of duty," he calls her "Jewel."

Surely no father's love could be deeper or be more beautifully depicted; nothing either could be braver or more dignified than his acceptance of defeat. His daughter is lost, his life ended, he has no wish to parade his grief or to delay the urgent public business. Only when the Duke offers him commonplace consolation he replies—

"I never yet did hear  
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear;  
I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of State."

Othello is ordered to start for Cyprus immediately, "to-night," and the question arises as to the fitting disposition of Desdemona. "Why! at her father's," suggests the Duke, but neither Brabantio, his daughter, nor Othello, will have it so, and at her earnest prayer she is permitted to accompany Othello.

It appears to us probable that the Duke's suggestion that Desdemona should return to her father's house was an attempt to solve the difficulty of her marriage. The State needed Othello so sorely that it dared not offend or oppose him, but had Desdemona returned to her father, a divorce could have been pronounced immediately on the termination of the war. We know that Othello was recalled from Cyprus at the earliest possible moment.

The council breaks up, and stung by the commendations heaped upon the thief who has robbed him, stung by the neglect and ingratitude of his child, whom he sees rejoicing in the arms of her husband, Brabantio speaks the warning which, little as he suspects it, is his daughter's death-warrant—

"Look to her, Moor; have a quick eye to see;  
She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee."

"My life upon her faith!" cries the happy, triumphant Othello; but wait until the third Act, when the warning is repeated by Iago, and then listen how different is the reply.

Brabantio goes home to his palace to die. Desdemona and Othello, without a thought for him, and deliriously happy in each other's love, prepare to embark for Cyprus. Iago, before joining them, lingers a few minutes on the stage, hoodwinking Roderigo, and making his fool his purse. We hear that into his unclean mind suspicions have found place of his wife Emilia and the Moor, although any creature less vile would have known the groundlessness of such fears when Othello desired him to let Emilia attend upon Desdemona.

Finally we listen as the arch-villain concocts the "poison" that shall madden Othello, and bring death to his own enemies—

"Cassio's a proper man; let me see now:  
To get his place and to plume up my will  
A double knavery—How, how?—Let me see:  
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear  
That he is too familiar with his wife.  
He hath a person and a smooth dispose  
To be suspected, framed to make women false.  
The Moor is of a free and open nature,  
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,  
And will as tenderly be led by the nose  
As asses are.  
I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light."

And the curtain falls on one of the most masterly first Acts ever written—indeed in our opinion the only first Act to compare with it, is that with which *Hamlet* opens. The scheme of the tragedy is set forth, we have a clear insight of the *dramatis personæ*, and await the working out of Iago's scheme of revenge, and Heaven's retribution. And it is worth noting here that in the coarse and bloody story by Giraldi Cinthio, on which Shakespeare founded his tragedy, there is no character corresponding to Brabantio. There the virtuous and beautiful heroine is the victim of blind fate. Shakespeare introduced Brabantio because he knew there is no such thing as blind fate, that death and sorrow are the wages of sin, and as we watch Iago concocting his horrible "poison," we find the ingredients are the credulous folly of Othello, the loose life of Cassio, the breach of trust by Emilia, and above all, the filial cruelty and lack of truth of Desdemona.

(To be continued.)

## THE BISHOP OF RIPON ON THE OBJECT OF EXISTENCE.\*

COMMENCING by referring to Boswell's question to Dr. Johnson, "What would you do if you were left alone in a tower with a baby?" the Bishop remarked that a great mistake, which prevailed in many people's minds in regard to the training of children, was an immense belief in the power of instinct. He believed in having instincts, but, like most other things, the possessed instinct wanted educating. A person might possess a very sincere, but at the same time a very unintelligent, affection.

There should be, added his Lordship, a college set up for the training of possible parents, for it was a very desirable thing that they should be prepared for the important duties which were going to be intrusted to their hands.

### Mind and Body.

The child must be trained to become supreme in his own little kingdom of body and mind. At one time he used to believe that the mind should be so absolutely strong that it should be independent of anything that affected the body. That was very difficult philosophy to practise, and very difficult to believe. It was difficult to be good-tempered with a bilious headache. It was difficult to be perfectly happy and Mark-Tapleyish with a fiery dose of neuralgia. When the ass brayed the prophet was bound to listen if he were wise.

The parent should realise that the body and the mind were so closely connected that they inevitably affected each other, and the mother who fed her baby merely because it cried was setting up the first bonds of self-indulgence. Sensations, and the emotions they aroused, were the raw material out of which character was built.

When the child hurt itself, added the Bishop, there was the

\* Address given to the Leeds Branch of the P.N.E.U. Reported by the *Leeds Mercury*.